

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1064
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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SUBJAC ROKG REQUEST FOR US GOOD OFFICES WITH SOVIETS RE
KAMCHATKA POLLACK FISHERY

REF: STATE 301140

SUMMARY: ROKG REQUESTS USG GOOD OFFICES IN PROBING
SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO ESTABLISH A DIRECT CHANNEL FOR
THE PURPOSE OF MAINTAINING ACCESS FOR KOREAN FISHING
VESSELS TO THE ALASKA POLLACK FISHERY OFF KAMCHATKA.
SHOULD THE SOVIETS BE UNWILLING TO ESTABLISH CONTACT,
THE ROK WOULD ASK THE USG TO REPRESENT KOREAN INTEREST
IN ARRANGING PRACTICAL MEASURES FOR MAINTAINING ACCESS
TO THAT FISHERY THROUGH COMMERCIAL OR OTHER MEANS.
END SUMMARY.

1. DECEMBER 14, 1976 MEDIA REPORT THAT THE ROKG IS
SEEKING TO OPEN TALKS WITH THE SOVIET UNION TO PERMIT
CONTINUED ACCESS BY KOREAN FISHING VESSELS TO THE
POLLACK FISHERY OFF KAMCHATKA AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A 200 MILE CONSERVATION ZONE. UPON INQUIRY BY
EMBOFF RE ACCURACY OF REPORTS, MR. HUH SEUNG, CHIEF OF
THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION DIVISION, MOFA, SAID THAT HE
HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO REQUEST THE GOOD OFFICES OF THE
USG IN ESTABLISHING A CHANNEL TO THE USSR FOR FISHERIES
PURPOSES. VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS YUN HA-CHONG
PRESENTED THE SAME REQUEST TO DCM STERN.

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2. HUH SAID THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SOVIET 200 MILE ZONE IS A MATTER OF GRAVE CONCERN TO THE ROKG BECAUSE PRACTICALLY ALL OF THE ALASKA POLLACK CATCH OF 340,000 METRIC TONS IN 1975 AND AN ESTIMATED 440,000 METRIC TONS IN 1976 WAS FROM THE KAMCHATKA AREA. ITS CLOSURE WOULD HAVE A SERIOUS IMPACT ON THE KOREAN FOOD SUPPLY.

3. HE ASKED THAT THE EMBASSY TRANSMIT HIS GOVERNMENT'S REQUEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT CONVEY THE FOLLOWING VIEW TO THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS AND SOLICIT THAT GOVERNMENT'S REACTION: THE ROKG ADHERES TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO PRESERVE AND MANAGE OCEAN FISHERY RESOURCES FOR THEIR OPTIMAL UTILIZATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF MANKIND. AT THE SAME TIME, IT TAKES THE VIEW THAT WITHIN THE APPLICATION OF THAT PRINCIPLE, THE TRADITIONAL OPERATIONS OF FISHERY NATIONS SHOULD CONTINUE, AND IT IS PREPARED TO OBSERVE THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT SHALL APPLY TO THE 200 MILE CONSERVATION ZONE TO BE ESTABLISHED OFF ITS SHORES. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE, AT PRESENT, NO DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, THE ROKG WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT EXCLUSION SIMPLY BECAUSE OF THE ABSENCE OF SUCH RELATIONS FROM PUBLIC SEAS (IN CONTRAST TO STATE TERRITORY) FISHERY RESOURCES WHICH ARE IMPORTANT TO THE NUTRITIONAL NEEDS OF ITS PEOPLE. THE ROKG WISHES TO INITIATE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT EITHER ON SOVIET TERRITORY OR IN A THIRD COUNTRY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ARRANGING FOR THE CONTINUED ACCWSS OF ITS FISHING VESSELS TO THE ALASKA POLLACK RESOURCES WITHIN THE PROPOSED 200 MILE CONSERVATION ZONE OF THE USSR. IT TRUSTS THAT A FAVORABLE RESPONSE WILL SOON BE RECEIVED THROUGH THE USG.

4. HUH REPORTED THAT SHOULD IT BE IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE ANY ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE SOVIETS, THE ROKG WOULD ASK THE USG TO REPRESENT KOREAN INTERESTS TO THE SOVIETS IN ATTEMPTING TO WORK OUT PRACTICAL MEASURES, PERHAPS THROUGH COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATIONS, TO MAINTAIN ACCESS TO

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THE KAMCHATKA POLLACK FISHERY.

5. HE ASKED THAT THE EMBASSY ALSO REQUEST (A) THE ENGLISH VERSION OF THE SOVIET PROCLAMATION (THE ROKG HAS ONLY A JAPANESE TRANSLATION), (B) ANY USG VIEWS ON THE EXPECTED DATE ON WHICH THE SOVIET PROCLAMATION WILL TAKE EFFECT, (C) ANY INFORMATION ON DETAILS OF SOVIET LICENSING, QUOTA ALLOCATIONS OR PUNITIVE MEASURES, AND (D)

THE NAMES OF COUNTRIES BESIDES JAPAN AND KOREA WHICH WILL BE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SOVIET ZONE. HUH NOTED THAT THE PROCLAMATION MENTIONS APPLICATION FORMS AND THAT "JURIDICAL PERSONS" OR COMPANIES MUST OBTAIN SOVIET GOVERNMENT APPROVAL.

6. HUH OBSERVED THAT MOFA BELIEVES THAT IT WOULD BE "IMPRACTICAL" TO EXPECT THE SOVIETS TO BE WILLING TO SIGN A TREATY WITH THE ROK, ALTHOUGH IT IS LEGALLY POSSIBLE FOR STATES WITHOUT FORMAL RELATIONS TO ENTER INTO TREATY RELATIONSHIPS.

7. COMMENT: COINCIDING WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE US ZONE, THE ADOPTION OF A 200 MILE SOVIET CONSERVATION ZONE FROM WHICH KOREAN FISHERMEN WOULD BE EXCLUDED PORTENDS DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ROK DEEPSEA FISHING INDUSTRY. IN 1975 THE ALASKA POLLACK CATCH OFF KAMCHATKA ALONE PROVIDED 59 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL ROK DEEPSEA TONNAGE OF FISH AND CRUSTACEANS AND PROVIDED 29 PERCENT OF THE FISH FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION OR ABOUT 18 PERCENT OF THE AVERAGE DAILY PER CAPITA ADULT INTAKE OF ANIMAL PROTEIN.

8. NEITHER OF THE TWO OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE ROKG, EITHER TO PRESERVE AS MUCH OF THE KAMCHATKA FISHERY AS POSSIBLE, OR TO TRANSFER THEIR LOSSES TO THE US SIDE OF THE NORTH PACIFIC APPEARS TO BE PROMISING. HOWEVER, THEY HAVE LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO PURSUE BOTH OPTIONS AT THIS POINT AND HOPE FOR THE BEST. THEY PERCEIVE THE US AS THE SOLE NATION WITH POLITICAL LEVERAGE ON THE SOVIETS THROUGH THE CATCH ALLOCATION PROCESS. SHOULD THE SOVIETS FAIL TO PROVIDE CONTINUED ACCESS TO KOREA'S TRADITIONAL FISHERIES AREA OFF
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KAMCHATKA, KOREA WOULD THEN SEE ITSELF IN A POSITION TO PURSUE ITS DESIRE (EXPRESSED DURING GIFA TALKS) THAT THE US REDUCE THE SOVIET QUOTA IN US WATERS BY THE AMOUNT DENIED THE ROK IN SOVIET WATERS, AND ASSIGN THE DIFFERENCE TO THE ROK.

9. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT INTERCEDING FOR ROK WITH SOVIETS WOULD PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS TO US. (A) IT WOULD HELP ASSUAGE THE BITTERNESS RESULTING FROM US FISHING ACT, (B) IT WOULD PROVIDE SPECIFIC INSTANCE OF GENERAL REASSURANCES GIVEN ROKG REGARDING VALUE TO KOREA OF ASSOCIATION WITH U.S. AT PARTICULARLY USEFUL TIME.

(C) IT WOULD HELP ASSURE THAT THE WORLDWIDE LOS SYSTEM

WHICH IS BEING SET UP ON AN AD HOC BASIS, FIRST BY THE
US AND NOW THE SOVIETS, IS EQUITABLE AND REASONABLE.
ANY SYSTEM WHICH EXCLUDED THE KOREANS FROM RUSSIAN
SUPERVISED WATERS JUST BECAUSE OF THE ABSENCE OF DIP-
LOMATIC RELATIONS VIOLATES THE TEST OF FAIRNESS.

10. ACTION REQUEST: THAT THE US SUPPORT THE KOREAN
INITIATIVE AND THAT ANY INFORMATION ON THE DETAILS OF
THE SOVIET ZONE BE PROVIDED FOR TRANSMISSION TO THE ROKG.
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